CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 30 July 1998, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Maimeskul (Ukraine)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 800th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

As you know, the representative of Spain, Ambassador Martínez Morcillo, is to leave his post in Geneva, since he has been called by his Government to take on other duties. He had the honour to be the first representative of Spain when Spain was admitted to the CD as a full member. During the four years he has spent in Geneva, he has presented and upheld the positions of his Government ardently and with diplomatic talent which everybody recognized. On behalf of all of us, I wish him and his family much success in his new functions and much personal happiness.

On the list of speakers for today, I have the representatives of Brazil, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Germany, Algeria, Austria, Spain, Australia, Argentina, South Africa, New Zealand and France. Before giving the floor to the speakers on my list, I would like on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf to wish a warm welcome to the Deputy Minister for Policy Planning and International Organizations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Ambassador Kim Sam-hoon, and the Commissioner of the Federal German Government for Disarmament and Arms Control, His Excellency Ambassador Rüdiger Hartmann, who will be taking the floor before the Conference. I am sure that the Conference will listen to their statements with keen interest.

I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Lafer.

Mr. LAFER (Brazil): Mr. President, in my previous intervention under your presidency, I already had the pleasure of conveying felicitations on your assumption of the incumbency as well as of expressing support in your endeavours. We look forward to continuing to work with the presidency in this third and final part of the 1998 session, particularly with regard to consultations pursuant to document CD/1500 on agenda item 1, taking into account your predecessor's preliminary findings.

I take the floor today to inform the Conference on Disarmament that on 13 July, the President of Brazil, Mr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, signed, after due and timely legislative approval, Brazil's instruments of accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and of ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, was present at the signing ceremony in Brasilia.

As President Cardoso remarked on the occasion, having become a party to these two treaties, Brazil consolidates a series of initiatives, on the internal and external fronts, including a partnership with our neighbour Argentina, that accord us all possible credentials in the field of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. In 1992, as Minister of External Relations of Brazil, I myself had the occasion of taking direct part in some of these initiatives.

(Mr. Lafer, Brazil)

The measures taken are in full consonance with the 1988 federal constitutional provision that nuclear energy will only be used for peaceful purposes in Brazil. In conceiving this provision, the 1988 Constituent Assembly lived up to the expectations of Brazilian society, whose paramount priorities lie in fields such as economic and social development, poverty eradication, health, education, the protection of human rights and the modernization of the State, rather than in developing nuclear weapons. They would only absorb scarce resources, create tension and mistrust in our region and jeopardize the integration process we are engaged in. Furthermore, in the world of today it is a misconception to see nuclear weapons possession as a source of strength. On the contrary, they seem to create new vulnerabilities. Other "soft" power factors, such as economic competitiveness, social cohesion and democratic institutions are decisive for a country to assert itself positively in the international scene. This is why Brazil gave up the option of developing nuclear weapons.

The end of the cold war has further exposed the absurdity of seeking greater security through the accumulation of weapons of mass destruction. The international community should no longer have to bear with the existence and perpetuation of nuclear weapons. A commitment to their complete elimination within a phased programme is an urgent necessity. Ongoing reductions in nuclear arsenals by nuclear-weapon States are important and commendable steps. But the peoples of the world need a clear, unequivocal pledge that the spectre of nuclear weapons will not go on haunting future generations indefinitely.

As stressed by President Cardoso, genuine nuclear disarmament measures are inextricable from the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. As a party to the NPT and to the CTBT, Brazil will continue to spare no effort to help achieve a world free from nuclear weapons, which remains our highest priority in the field of disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Akram.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, at the outset I wish to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Our session is resuming at what may turn out to be a critical turning point for the process of disarmament and for this Conference. We wish you every success.

May I take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation for the valuable work accomplished by your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Murat Sungar of Turkey, particularly his intensive efforts to find common ground to initiate work on the item which enjoys the highest priority on our agenda - nuclear disarmament?

We have noted the statement which has just been made by Ambassador Lafer of Brazil and we wish to welcome this statement. The action taken by Brazil has been made possible by the mutual restraint that has been exercised in the Latin American region. We wish we were as fortunate in South Asia.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

The nuclear test conducted by India, and Pakistan's response, have attracted considerable international attention, including in the Conference on Disarmament. Since the special meeting of the CD held on 2 June 1998, the South Asian situation has been discussed by the P-5, the G-8 and the Security Council and other forums. Pakistan has, naturally, noted the communiqués and decisions reached with great care and some concern.

We wish to assert a fundamental point with regard to our nuclear tests. The tests conducted by Pakistan, a non-party to the NPT, should be evaluated on the basis of the legal and political criteria which the international community has adopted in the CTBT itself.

The Treaty recognizes, in article IX, the sovereign right of a State party to the Treaty to withdraw from it in case of "extraordinary events related to the subject matter of this Treaty have jeopardized its supreme interests". Such withdrawal from the CTBT obviously implies that the concerned State would have the right to conduct further nuclear tests. During the negotiation of the CTBT, one State declared, at the highest level, that it would withdraw from the Treaty and resume testing, if its agencies determined that any one type of its nuclear weapons was no longer reliable and required further testing. Surely, nuclear explosions conducted by our adversary were much more "extraordinary", and would have justified withdrawal and testing by Pakistan even if it was a party to the CTBT and if the Treaty had been in force. Further, if such a response could be upheld after the CTBT had entered into force, it could certainly be justified in case of the nuclear tests conducted by Pakistan before it had even signed the CTBT.

During the CTBT negotiations, my delegation had stated specifically that this was an "all or nothing" treaty; that if one State continued to test, others could not be expected to refrain from doing so. Article XIV of the Treaty, requiring compulsory adherence by 44 States, was based on the fundamental presumption of collective and reciprocal restraint by all concerned. Thus, in conducting its nuclear tests in response to India's tests, Pakistan acted in accordance with the norms set out in the CTBT itself.

Indeed, when voting in favour of the CTBT in the General Assembly, Pakistan stated quite categorically that if a nuclear test was conducted by another State - we obviously had India in mind - we would be obliged to withdraw form the Treaty and, by implication, to conduct such nuclear tests if so required.

Moreover, the nuclear tests conducted by the Indian Government were followed by statements asserting that the strategic relationship had been altered, that India would deploy nuclear weapons, that this had implications for the settlement of Kashmir, that India could launch "hot pursuit" attacks across the Line of Control.

We could not ignore these belligerent declarations. Our failure to respond to India's nuclear tests could have eroded the delicate psychological judgements which are the essence of deterrence. Any Indian miscalculation

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

regarding Pakistan's capabilities - such as an adventure across the Line of Control or the international border - could have led to disastrous consequences.

We believe firmly in Pakistan that, whereas India's nuclear tests destabilized the "existential deterrence" which has operated between India and Pakistan for almost 20 years, Pakistan's tests have served to re-establish balance and stability.

Our friends should understand that Pakistan was compelled to respond to India's tests. We did not conduct our tests to undermine global non-proliferation; nor do we have the ambition to seek the formal status of a nuclear-weapon State; much less do we wish to set a "bad example" for others. Our national security, and the maintenance of mutual deterrence, was at stake. We had no choice but to respond.

We are sad that so many of our friends have not fully appreciated these compulsions and have equated Pakistan with India in their denunciations and punitive actions. This "equal" treatment of India and Pakistan has had an unequal impact - it has hurt Pakistan much more than India.

We deeply appreciate China's endeavour to seek a differentiation in the treatment between India and Pakistan and between the "culprit" and the "victim". We warmly welcome the wise resistance by France and some others to the use of sanctions. We also welcome the efforts made by those who were obliged by their laws to apply restraints to ameliorate their impact, and thus avoid unintended and counter-productive results.

Such understanding and gestures have encouraged the Government of Pakistan to open a dialogue with all these countries to address the security situation in South Asia. We have held high-level talks with China, France, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States and others during the past few weeks. The most recent and substantial dialogue was held between Pakistan's Foreign Secretary, Mr. Shamshad Ahmad, and the United States Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Strobe Talbott, in Islamabad last week.

Our ability to engage in such a substantive dialogue has improved in the wake of the strategic review which the Government of Pakistan conducted of our security posture recently in Islamabad. We have examined the positions taken by various friendly countries in the light of these national security conclusions. We do not believe there is a fundamental difference in the approach of the international community and Pakistan to the crisis in South Asia. Pakistan is not interested in a conventional or nuclear arms race with India. We wish to avoid a war; prevent nuclear escalation; promote conventional stability; lower tensions, and resolve the Kashmir dispute - the root cause of Indo-Pakistan problems. Moreover, Pakistan does not wish to contribute, in any way, to the further spread of nuclear weapons or sensitive technologies.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

We have concluded that a situation of mutual deterrence now exists between India and Pakistan. Pakistan will seek to maintain this situation of deterrence in future. The level at which this is maintained will be determined in accordance with any escalatory steps taken by India.

Pakistan is not interested in further escalation up the nuclear ladder with India. Our interest is to maintain nuclear deterrence which has been established at the lowest possible level. To maintain deterrence, Pakistan needs to ensure that it is not in a position of strategic vulnerability in certain areas - such as fissile materials and ballistic missiles.

A most immediate requirement for the preservation of the situation of nuclear deterrence is to convince India not to proceed with its threat to operationalize its nuclear weapons in the form of weaponized deployment of ballistic missiles and other delivery systems. We note that this is also a priority objective of the P-5 and G-8 countries.

Pakistan agrees that a halt in further nuclear tests is essential. It will serve to hold back the nuclear arms race in South Asia. Pakistan has declared a unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests. We are prepared to formalize a bilateral test-ban agreement with India, if it agrees.

As regards the CTBT, it should be recalled that Pakistan supported the CTBT's endorsement in the CD and voted for the Treaty in the United Nations General Assembly. With a proven capability to establish deterrence, Pakistan's position on the CTBT is no longer linked to the position of our neighbours. Our decision on adherence to the CTBT will depend on the evolution of our dialogue with friends and the evolution of a domestic consensus, as well as an assurance against the possibility of further nuclear testing by India.

Pakistan has consistently believed that a ban on the production of fissile materials should be promoted through a universal and non-discriminatory treaty negotiated in the CD and not through unilateral measures.

During discussions in Islamabad last week, Pakistan and the United States agreed to support the immediate commencement of negotiations on a non-discriminatory universal and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. To this end, Pakistan will join the United States and other CD members in promoting a decision for the establishment, at this session, of an ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate such a treaty on the basis of the report and mandate contained in document CD/1299, dated 24 March 1995 (the so-called Shannon report).

In the course of the negotiations in the ad hoc committee, Pakistan will, as envisaged in the Shannon report, raise its concerns about, and seek a solution to, the problem of unequal stockpiles.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

We believe that a wide disparity in fissile material stockpiles of India and Pakistan could erode the stability of nuclear deterrence. The impact of such asymmetry would be further exacerbated once India acquires the S-300 ABM systems and additional anti-aircraft systems from the Russian Federation.

The stability of mutual deterrence in South Asia may also be adversely affected by asymmetry in conventional weapons capabilities between India and Pakistan. This asymmetry is growing steadily due to Pakistan's economic difficulties, the embargoes still maintained against us by some major Powers and the massive arms acquisitions which India is currently making, particularly from Russia. We hope that concerted action will be adopted by the international community to redress this conventional inequality, which will inevitably intensify Pakistan's reliance on its nuclear capabilities.

Pakistan continues to adhere to its policy of not exporting sensitive nuclear technology or equipment. We are prepared to discuss the administrative and regulatory measures to implement this policy. This process should promote non-discrimination and reciprocal benefits. We cannot be simultaneously considered a partner and a target of non-proliferation regimes.

Kashmir holds the key to resolve the current security crisis in South Asia and is the fundamental issue influencing nuclear decisions by both Pakistan and India. India's rhetoric about the so-called "China threat" (and later, according to one minister, even a United States threat!) is designed to deflect attention from its real designs. Before assuming charge of Kashmir affairs, Home Minister Advani was honest enough to echo India's real objectives when he asked Pakistan to realize the change in the geo-strategic situation as a result of India's "bold and decisive steps to become a nuclear Power". He claimed that India was thus in a position to find a solution to the Kashmir problem by dealing with Pakistan firmly and strongly.

Kashmir has been recognized by the P-5 and others as the fundamental issue in South Asia, integral to a resolution of the crisis and with implications for international peace and security. This information is welcome, although overdue. But it will not be enough merely to "lower tensions" over Kashmir. This would be of transient value. There must be genuine progress towards the resolution of the dispute.

For its part, Pakistan wishes to resume the bilateral Foreign-Secretaries-level talks with India as proposed by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to his Indian counterpart at the Colombo summit. The international community must urge India to agree to the setting up of the eight working groups including on Kashmir and on peace and security in accordance with the agreement reached between India and Pakistan on 23 June 1997.

Pakistan of course realizes that the process of seeking a solution to the Kashmir dispute will be painstaking. But progress on Kashmir is essential to sustain the entire Indo-Pakistan dialogue and to lower tensions, even if this is a gradual process. In this context, Pakistan is willing to discuss various confidence-building measures with India. Such measures could include

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the strengthening of the United Nations Military Observer Group for India and Pakistan (UNMOGIB), with authority to patrol on both sides of the Line of Control; the submission of regular reports to the United Nations Security Council; removal of Indian army pickets in Srinagar and other Kashmiri towns and villages; partial withdrawal of Indian troops from Indian-held Kashmiri towns and villages; cessation of search and arrest operations; the stationing of ICRC monitors and the recognition of the All Parties Hurriyet Conference (APHC) as legitimate Kashmiri representatives.

For over 20 years, Pakistan has persisted in drawing the attention of the international community to the incendiary ingredients for peace and proliferation in South Asia. Our warnings that South Asia was the "most dangerous place in the world" were persistently ignored. Our démarches regarding the cruel war being waged by India in Kashmir, which could become a nuclear flashpoint, were brushed aside. Our proposals for non-proliferation were politely supported but studiously sidelined.

It is Pakistan's sincere hope that the international community will remain actively engaged in overcoming the crisis created by India's nuclear tests and provocative actions. It is only through a determined and sustained international endeavour that war can be avoided, tensions reduced, stability restored, proliferation stemmed and the underlying disputes resolved.

At the same time, peace and security in South Asia cannot be promoted and sustained on the basis of discrimination and double standards. Those who advocate non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament must themselves be seen to practise this. The call for nuclear restraint - in South Asia and elsewhere - is based on the moral objection to nuclear weapons as an unacceptable instrument of power. Pakistan fully supports the G-21's position that nuclear disarmament is the issue of highest priority for this Conference and that an ad hoc committee should be established immediately to undertake negotiations on the steps to be taken on nuclear disarmament, steps which have been so clearly identified by the G-21 and other eminent Councils and commissions.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement and his words of support for the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Kim Sam-hoon, Deputy Minister for Policy Planning and International Organizations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Mr. KIM (Republic of Korea): I am very pleased and honoured to speak before this important forum for multilateral arms control and disarmament negotiations. From 1991 to 1993, I served as Deputy Permanent Representative of our mission here, during which time the Republic of Korea was an observer. Today it gives me great satisfaction to return as a representative of a full-fledged member thanks to the expansion of the Conference in 1996.

Mr. President, first of all, I want to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference at this important juncture. My delegation has full confidence that your diplomatic skills and leadership will guide this Conference to a successful conclusion. As always, you can be

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assured of my delegation's full support. Let me also take this opportunity to extent my warm greetings to Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the CD, and to his deputy, Mr. Bensmail, and to all the staff of the secretariat.

As the international community has continued to grapple with a new security environment following the end of the cold war, it has strengthened its efforts to promote global security through multilateral negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation, particularly in the field of weapons of mass destruction.

These efforts have brought about significant and tangible outcomes such as the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the adoption of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards regime.

It is our firm belief that international efforts towards disarmament, especially with respect to weapons of mass destruction, are crucial to ensuring international peace and security. Towards this end, my country has always maintained its unreserved commitment to the cause of arms control and disarmament as a priority in its foreign policy.

This unflinching commitment is demonstrated by our participation in all major international agreements including the NPT, the BWC, the CWC and the CTBT. In all cases, we are faithfully abiding by our obligations and fulfilling our responsibilities as a State party, and will continue to do so.

The Republic of Korea is also actively participating in the international community's efforts to consolidate the nuclear non-proliferation regime, based on the NPT and its new review process, which includes the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards.

At the regional level, the Government of the Republic of Korea has initiated unilateral measures towards the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula which culminated in the signing of the Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in December 1991. The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is an essential component in our efforts to secure peace and stability in North-East Asia and beyond.

I am pleased to report to the Conference that, despite some difficulties, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, or KEDO, is making steady progress. The faithful implementation of the KEDO project contributes not only to peace and stability on the Korean peninsula, but also to strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Taking this opportunity, I wish to express our gratitude for the international community's continued support and assistance to KEDO.

My Government will do its best to ensure the successful implementation of KEDO's Light Water Reactor (LWR) project. Despite our current economic difficulties, we will fulfil our commitment to play a central role in the project by bearing 70 per cent of the total construction costs.

(Mr. Kim, Republic of Korea)

Our commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament is not limited to nuclear weapons but extends to other weapons of mass destruction. As a member of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), my Government is playing its due role in providing support for the effective implementation of the CWC. We are also deeply involved in the ongoing Ad Hoc Group negotiations on a verification protocol for the BWC.

Against this backdrop, my Government attaches great importance to the work of the CD, which has produced most of the important disarmament treaties. We value our membership in the Conference and take our responsibilities seriously. Recently there has been some scepticism about the utility of the CD due to the stalemate in substantive negotiations. However, we share the view that the CD is not a treaty factory, tasked with churning out treaties on an assembly line. Rather, it is a tool which is at the disposal of, and subject to, the member States' political will. With this perspective on the role of the CD, the Republic of Korea continues to have full confidence in its intrinsic value as the primary multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament.

The first round of consultations during the second session in accordance with the programme of work provided us with a better understanding of each other's positions on important issues and established a good basis for our future work. The remaining task for us is to maintain this momentum and move into the next stage of substantive negotiations.

In the light of these accomplishments, I wish to commend the valuable work done by the Presidential troika on agenda item 1, and by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Negative Security Assurances, as well as by the six Special Coordinators on other agenda items and the CD reform issues.

I would now like to make a few observations on issues of primary concern to my country. The recent developments in South Asia have underscored the urgency and importance of agenda item 1, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", as Ambassador Sungar of Turkey stated in his preliminary report of 18 June. The Republic of Korea fully endorses his assessment, and strongly encourages the Conference to take a concrete decision on this agenda item in this part of the session.

In this context, my Government attaches the highest priority to the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT), in accordance with the statement of the Special Coordinator of the CD and the mandate contained therein.

The FMCT is the next logical and practical step after the CTBT. It is a sine qua non for strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and for the eventual achievement of nuclear disarmament, making nuclear arms reduction irreversible. As for the so-called "political context" for its negotiation, we are of the view that the linkage of the negotiations on this treaty with other issues is counter-productive and may even be self-defeating by delaying the process of nuclear disarmament and the ultimate elimination of nuclear

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weapons. The difference of opinion on the scope of the treaty should not be an obstacle to initiating negotiations, as relevant issues could be raised in the process of negotiations.

My delegation supports the proposal by the Austrian delegation on the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee to start negotiations on the FMCT. The negotiations must be conducted in such a way as to secure the universality and effectiveness of the treaty. Accordingly, it is important that all the countries with nuclear capabilities, including non-States parties to the NPT, fully take part in the negotiations from the initial stage.

We deeply regret the recent nuclear tests carried out by India and Pakistan, especially at this time when international efforts to realize a nuclear-test-free world have been increasingly strengthened. My Government has strongly urged these two countries to desist from further testing and halt their nuclear weapons development programmes, and to join the NPT and CTBT unconditionally and without delay.

In this regard, we have made clear our positions on these grave developments in the various international forums. In particular, we have stressed the need to prevent the transfer of nuclear-weapons-related materials, equipment and technology from them to third countries.

I would now like to add that my delegation welcomes the statement just made by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan. His country's decision to participate in FMCT negotiations based on the Shannon mandate is indeed a positive development on which the CD should capitalize.

Now I wish to turn your attention to anti-personnel landmines, another issue of importance to us. But first let me commend Ambassador Campbell of Australia for his tireless efforts as Special Coordinator to find a way forward on this difficult issue.

Since last year, my Government has supported the CD's role in this matter and the Special Coordinator's endeavours to find a proper balance between humanitarian considerations and the security aspects of the issue. My Government is in a unique position to understand the humanitarian concerns of the international community as well as the security concerns of many other member States which could not joint the comprehensive ban on APLs at this stage. After considering various aspects of the Special Coordinator's report on 25 June, my delegation came to the conclusion that the Special Coordinator's proposed mandate for the ad hoc committee on APLs with the statement of understanding contained in his report is a good basis for our negotiations.

Without describing the well-known security situation on the Korean peninsula, my delegation just wants to re-emphasize Korea's determination to minimize the inhumane consequences of APLs. This commitment was demonstrated by a series of steps recently taken by my Government such as extending indefinitely export moratoriums on APLs; deciding to accede to the CCW and its

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Amended Protocol II in the near future; and doubling our financial contributions to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance.

The final important issue for my delegation that I want to mention is transparency in armaments (TIA). Transparency is the central element in confidence- and security-building measures on both the regional and global levels. In this regard, we consider the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms an important instrument for promoting greater openness and transparency in conventional arms transfers. My Government has been faithfully participating in the Register since its inception, and supports the work of the Group of Governmental Experts for its further improvement.

In our view there are two interrelated problems that need to be addressed in order to make the Register a truly effective global regime. The first is how to ensure universal participation. Currently only half of the United Nations Member States are participating. This is rather unsatisfactory. Second is the issue of expanding the scope of the Register. We are ready to discuss all these issues in a more structured manner within the framework of the Ad Hoc Committee.

There are, of course, other issues on the CD's agenda that merit serious attention and effort. I would be remiss if I didn't mention negative security assurances, the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) and the CD reform issues. However, we cannot realistically expect to complete all our work at hand this year considering the time limits. Accordingly, I humbly suggest that we make the most out of the time available and concentrate our efforts on a specific issue where consensus is most feasible.

Although recent events in South Asia have set back our efforts, it is a testimony to the CD's accomplishments that the frameworks we have established together remain as relevant as ever. With the common will of the international community, it is indeed crucial for all of us to make continued efforts to strengthen the CD's work.

Before I conclude, I feel obliged to restate my delegation's strong support for the further expansion of the CD's membership. As we emphasized on a number of previous occasions, the expansion of the membership will prove beneficial to the Conference by broadening its representativeness as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and by reinvigorating the Conference itself.

In closing, my delegation wishes to reaffirm its determination to help advance the substantive work of the CD. We are confident that with a concerted effort, accompanied by a spirit of flexibility by all the member States, the international community as a whole will bear the fruits of our labours through increased security for us all.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his important statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair and to the secretariat. I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ambassador Soutar.

Mr. SOUTAR (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, may I first of all congratulate you on the assumption of your presidency? As Ambassador Akram has pointed out, you assume office at a critical juncture in the work of the Conference, and I should like to assure you of my delegation's full support.

As you know, the present British Government announced when it came to power that it would carry out a Strategic Defence Review. The outcome of that Review was announced on 8 July. The resulting White Paper and its supporting essays can be obtained from Her Majesty's Stationery Office or read on the Internet (www.mod.uk). I do not therefore propose to summarize all aspects of the Review, but I would like to stress that consideration of how best to carry forward the Government's commitment to the global elimination of nuclear weapons was a key aspect of it. And I have asked for the floor today to convey to the Conference the thinking of my Government on this subject in the light of the Review.

Before I turn to the specific actions which the United Kingdom is taking as a result of its Strategic Defence Review, I should like to set the role of smaller nuclear-weapon States like ourselves in the wider context of the actions many different States will need to take if we are to achieve our common goal.

Clearly, a vital contribution to this goal is made by all those States that have undertaken obligations not to acquire nuclear weapons by becoming non-nuclear-weapon States party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We recognize and acknowledge the enormous contribution made by those States towards facilitating the world's journey along the road to global elimination. As the Review says, all States have their part to play. And I welcome in this context the recent accession by Brazil to the NPT.

But vital as the contribution of non-nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT is to the achievement of our goal, there are two other categories of State which will also have to make major contributions if it is to be achieved. I refer of course to the five nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT and to the three non-parties to the NPT with significant unsafeguarded facilities, namely India, Israel and Pakistan.

As far as these non-parties are concerned, the United Kingdom continues to hope that one day they will take the steps necessary to become non-nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT. We have made this very clear through our co-sponsorship of the Middle East resolution adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and by our support for United Nations Security Council resolution 1172. But we are not naive. We recognize that the three countries have spent 30 years refusing to adhere to the NPT, because, as things stand, they do not believe that renouncing the nuclear option would be in their interests.

In these circumstances we shall continue our efforts to persuade these countries that in the meantime it is still very much in their interests to become parties to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and to participate

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constructively in negotiations for a fissile material cut-off treaty. And of course, with our EU partners, the United States and others, we shall also continue to work hard to bring about both a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and a sustained bilateral dialogue on all outstanding issues between India and Pakistan. Movement on these subjects by these non-parties to the NPT is clearly essential if we are to achieve our goal.

As to the five nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT, all five clearly have a key role to play in movement towards the global elimination of nuclear weapons. But, equally clearly, there is, for the time being, a big distinction between the two largest nuclear-weapon States (the Russian Federation and the United States) and the three smaller nuclear-weapon States (China, France and the United Kingdom). What are their respective responsibilities in the march towards elimination?

An enormous responsibility lies upon the shoulders of the two largest nuclear-weapon States. Fortunately, it is a responsibility they have not shirked. Over the last 10 years they have concluded agreements and taken unilateral actions which have vastly reduced the number of their deployed nuclear weapons - and they have begun dismantling their non-deployed nuclear weapons. But this welcome momentum needs to be sustained - initially by ratification of the START II Treaty and its Protocol and of the associated ABMT-related agreements, and then by the subsequent opening and early conclusion of negotiations on the START III Treaty, to which both parties are committed.

In emphasizing the heavy responsibilities of the larger nuclear-weapon States, I do not mean in any way to diminish the burden of responsibility that also falls on the smaller nuclear-weapon States. Their role on the path to elimination is, first of all, not to become large nuclear-weapon States, and, secondly, to accept that in due course they will need to join the larger nuclear-weapon States in negotiations about their nuclear weapons. And it is in the context of this general framework that I would wish to place the specific actions that the United Kingdom has taken in recent years, and is taking now, as a result of its Strategic Defence Review.

I said a moment ago that one of the major responsibilities of a smaller nuclear-weapon State is not to become a large nuclear-weapon State. The United Kingdom is more than fulfilling this requirement. A decade ago, in addition to operating our force of four Polaris submarines, we were involved in operating land-based nuclear missiles and nuclear artillery, we had a maritime tactical nuclear capability, and we had a significant number of free-fall nuclear bombs in service with our air force.

Since then, far from becoming a larger nuclear-weapon State, we have been becoming a steadily smaller nuclear-weapon State. Some years ago now we withdrew from any involvement with land-based nuclear missiles and nuclear artillery systems. Subsequently, we decided that we no longer needed to retain a maritime tactical nuclear weapons capability. And in March of this

(Mr. Soutar, United Kingdom)

year we withdrew from service the last of our free-fall nuclear bombs. These developments mean that we now have only one nuclear system in operation. And the Strategic Defence Review took a careful look at this system.

As a result of the Review, the British Government has decided that: overall, the United Kingdom will maintain fewer than 200 operationally available nuclear warheads (compared with the previously announced ceiling of 300); a Trident submarine on deterrent patrol will carry only 48 warheads (compared with the previously announced ceiling of 96 warheads on each submarine); only one of our four Trident submarines will be on deterrent patrol at any one time; and this submarine's missiles will not be targeted and will routinely be at a "notice to fire" measured in days (rather than the few minutes' quick-reaction alert sustained throughout the cold war).

These announcements reflect the British Government's recognition that there have been dramatic improvements for the better in the strategic landscape of Europe - and we hope that these announcements will further reinforce these very welcome improvements. For 50 years in Europe we have operated in a world where the dominant concepts have been nuclear deterrence against each other and conventional defence against each other. Moving towards a new world of mutual cooperation with one another and joint partnership with one another is not easy. The steps we have taken are intended to give this process a further push, and thus to bring us all closer to achieving the global elimination of nuclear weapons.

The British Government has already made it quite clear that, when satisfied with progress towards this goal, it will ensure that our remaining nuclear weapons are included in multilateral negotiations. As a result of the Strategic Defence Review we now intend to prepare ourselves more fully for that day by setting in hand a programme to develop a core of expertise in the United Kingdom on how to verify the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons. We have made significant contributions in the past to the arrangements for verifying nuclear materials and prohibitions on nuclear testing. We intend this new programme to put us in a position to contribute in the reductions and elimination area as well. It is a tangible sign of our real commitment to the global elimination of nuclear weapons.

As a result of the Strategic Defence Review, we have also taken other tangible steps. If we are to achieve the goal of global elimination, it will be necessary, sooner or later, for all States which have had nuclear programmes outside safeguards to account for the fissile material they have produced in the past. As a result of the Strategic Defence Review we have therefore begun a process aimed at providing such an account. In addition, it will be necessary for such States to be transparent about their existing holdings of fissile material. As a contribution to this process the Strategic Defence Review concluded that we should for the first time declare our defence stocks of such material.

On the date of the announcement of the outcome of the Review they comprised 7.6 tons of plutonium and 21.9 tons of highly enriched uranium. We

(Mr. Soutar, United Kingdom)

already publish information about our holdings of civil plutonium, and we intend in future to publish similar information about our civil holdings of highly enriched uranium.

But we are not merely setting a new standard for transparency in relation to these materials. Our civil holdings of plutonium and highly enriched uranium are already under your EURATOM safeguards and liable to inspection by IAEA. We are now taking steps to put under these same safeguards arrangements 4.4 of the 7.6 tons of plutonium currently in our unsafeguarded defence stocks - in other words, more than 50 per cent of it. We have also made it clear that, while we will retain our right to withdraw material from safeguards for national security reasons, such withdrawals will, as a matter of policy, be limited to small quantities of materials not suitable for explosive purposes - and the details will be made public. All this is further evidence of our intention to help push forward towards the global elimination of nuclear weapons.

So far as the further production of these materials is concerned, we made clear in April 1995 that we had ceased producing them for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. At that time all our facilities for enriching uranium were already under inspection both by EURATOM and by IAEA. Most of our operations to reprocess plutonium were also under EURATOM inspection, and liable to inspection by IAEA - but those involving spent fuel from our tritium-producing reactors were not. As a result of the Strategic Defence Review, however, we have now decided that the reprocessing of this fuel too should be under EURATOM inspection and liable to inspection by IAEA. This means that henceforward all planned reprocessing and enrichment operations in the United Kingdom will take place under international safeguards. The United Kingdom has therefore gone a long way to meeting what will undoubtedly be one of the main verification requirements of a fissile material cut-off treaty.

There could be no clearer demonstration of my Government's commitment to such a treaty. I should like to stress yet again why we believe it is so important. First, there can be no final achievement of the global elimination of nuclear weapons without verification arrangements on all reprocessing and enrichment facilities - so by putting these in place, an FMCT will also put in place an essential foundation for the eventual achievement of nuclear disarmament. Second, such a treaty will put a verified end to production of unsafeguarded fissile material by all those States which are still legally free to produce more of it - and some of which still are producing more of it, or are likely to do so in the absence of an FMCT. We reiterate our strong support for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of such negotiations in accordance with the Shannon report and the mandate contained therein. Therefore, I warmly welcome the statement by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan that his Government is prepared to promote the initiation of negotiations on the basis of the Shannon report and the mandate therein. I hope very much, Mr. President, that you can take advantage of this important development to guide the Conference towards a decision during this third session to make a start on negotiations.

(Mr. Soutar, United Kingdom)

I must also put in a plea for all those States which have not yet done so to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. It is now almost two years since the Treaty was opened for signature and overwhelmingly endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly. Yet only 16 States have so far ratified it. I am proud to say that the United Kingdom is one of these, as is our friend and ally France. Recent events in India and Pakistan have only served to emphasize once again the importance of this Treaty if we are to make it impossible for old nuclear arms races to restart and new ones to develop. My Government appeals to all members of this Conference which have not yet done so to ratify this Treaty - and particularly all those members of the Conference whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty to enter into force. They will find it serves their interests and those of the international community as a whole.

The United Kingdom has never made any secret of the fact that we do not believe the global elimination of nuclear weapons will be achieved solely by action in the nuclear sphere. Progress towards nuclear weapons elimination will be greatly facilitated by improving political relationships between key States. That is why the United Kingdom lays great emphasis on the importance of exploiting to the full the opportunities for cooperation and partnership in Europe offered by the recently established NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace, as well as by longer-established bodies like the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe. I am glad to say that a major theme of the Strategic Defence Review is the importance of using defence assets to bolster diplomatic efforts of this sort - a process it terms "defence diplomacy".

It is also apparent to us that progress towards nuclear elimination will also be greatly facilitated by parallel progress in other areas. I am sure that no one in this room will be in any doubt about the importance we attach to the successful conclusion of the negotiations in another forum for a protocol to strengthen the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention - or to universal adherence and compliance with that Convention. We also attach great importance to universal adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention - and to compliance with it. The Strategic Defence Review has further reinforced our support for these important instruments.

As we approach our goal we shall also have to think more about arrangements for controlling conventional weapons and for strengthening collective security arrangements. In the meantime we hope all States will make the returns needed to make the United Nations Arms Register effective - and will also remain open to ways of further refining and developing it. Progress on limiting conventional weapons by means of regional agreements has already been made in Europe, and we would welcome similar developments in other regions. For our own part, the Strategic Defence Review makes clear our firm commitment to the conventional arms control process in Europe.

While I am on the conventional theme, I should like to announce that the United Kingdom has completed the necessary parliamentary procedures for ratification of the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Landmines and we hope

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to deposit our instrument of ratification very soon, thus fulfilling our pledge to be among the first 40 ratifications needed to bring the Convention into force. We shall work for the universalization of the Convention and will press in this Conference for complementary action, which could begin with a transfer ban. We are also taking an active interest in the problems posed by small arms.

As for other issues which are before the Conference on Disarmament, the United Kingdom welcomes the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances and looks forward to taking part actively in its work. We have no objection in principle to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on outer space issues but its title and mandate should reflect modern realities and the fact that there is no longer an arms race in outer space. The United Kingdom also supports an ad hoc committee on transparency in armaments with the main aim of strengthening the United Nations Arms Register. On both these subjects we will continue our constructive dialogue with the respective Special Coordinators.

But in conclusion, I wish to return to the main theme of my remarks, the commitment of the British Government to the global elimination of nuclear weapons, and the proof we have given of it in the outcome of our Strategic Defence Review - through reductions in the number and readiness of our remaining nuclear forces; through tangible commitments to the goal of elimination in the form of a programme to study the verification issues involved and in the form of transparency measures of the type that elimination will require; and though a package of measures to place fissile material surplus to defence needs under safeguards, to forgo the withdrawal of any of our safeguarded stocks of such material for use in weapons, and to place under safeguards all planned future reprocessing and enrichment operations. Nothing could demonstrate more clearly our commitment to an FMCT. And our ratification of the CTBT has already made clear our commitment to that Treaty. I believe that the outcome of our Strategic Defence Review demonstrates that the United Kingdom is at the forefront of efforts to pursue the global elimination of nuclear weapons, and we intend to remain there.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Germany, Ambassador Hartmann, Commissioner of the Federal Government for Disarmament and Arms Control.

Mr. HARTMANN (Germany): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency for the third session of the Conference on Disarmament in 1998. Ukraine has not only renounced possession of nuclear weapons but also completely eliminated large arsenals of these weapons. Against this background, it is particularly fortunate that you, Ukraine's representative, will guide the work of the Conference at the present crucial juncture. You can rest assured that you have my delegation's full support as you strive to move forward to substantive work.

(Mr. Hartmann, Germany)

I should also like to express my gratitude and appreciation to your four predecessors this year and to the Special Coordinators for their untiring efforts. We hope that their endeavours will result in a work programme which can make a meaningful contribution towards enhancing international security and stability.

I also want to thank Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of this Conference, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, his deputy, and all the secretariat's staff for their unfailing effective and professional contribution to the work of the Conference.

In February 1996, when I had the privilege of addressing this Conference for the first time, I stressed the need for early conclusion of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty. Since then, the adoption of the CTBT by the United Nations General Assembly and the signing of the Treaty by an overwhelming majority of States have provided confirmation of the world community's long-standing desire for nuclear-test explosions to cease once and for all. Regrettably, these hopes were dashed by the recent nuclear tests by India and Pakistan. Both countries claim that they acted in pursuit of their national security interests and did not violate any legal obligations incumbent upon them. They did, however, act contrary to the worldwide trend towards the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, blatantly ignoring the security concerns of other countries.

At the same time, these developments dramatically underline the fact that although the cold war has ended, we cannot consider the international security situation to have fundamentally improved. There is rather an urgent need for determined action to maintain the non-proliferation regime and to make the disarmament success of the past irreversible, thus providing a solid basis for further disarmament efforts.

It is clearly evident that progress has been uneven in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. On the one hand, the effective implementation of START I ahead of schedule, as well as further significant reductions in strategic nuclear arsenals agreed upon at START II and envisaged for future START III negotiations, do open up a positive perspective. In addition, the unilateral reductions carried out by two other nuclear countries are encouraging. I should particularly like to welcome the recent decision by the British Government to further reduce its nuclear forces. Furthermore, the increasing number of ratifications of the CTBT are positive signals. I am glad to announce that the Federal Republic of Germany will submit its ratification instrument to the United Nations Secretary-General next month. On the other hand, the Russian Federation has yet to ratify START II, effectively hampering the process of nuclear disarmament. And finally, the nuclear-weapons programmes announced by India and Pakistan represent a particularly bleak development, which seriously undermines both the process of nuclear disarmament and the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

It is imperative that developments with regard to nuclear weapons continue in the right direction. In line with United Nations Security Council resolution 1172 and numerous other declarations, it is essential that the

(Mr. Hartmann, Germany)

following steps be taken. First, all member States of the NPT should reaffirm in word and in deed their commitment to this important Treaty and strongly oppose any attempt to undermine it. This also means that there can be no recognition - de jure or de facto - of any new emerging nuclear-weapon States. Germany notes with appreciation Brazil's recent moves to ratify both the NPT and the CTBT.

Second, India and Pakistan should desist from embarking on the path of nuclear weaponization. Our experiences in Europe have shown that in an arms race no one can really win. Part of the increased stability reached in Europe over the last decade can rather be ascribed to consistent policies of disarmament and confidence-building. At present we note with concern developments in South Asia, which contrast sharply with the political goals and values we support.

Third, the Governments of India and Pakistan should reiterate and confirm that they are prepared to introduce strict export controls on nuclear material and missiles and enact the relevant legislation and legally binding administrative regulations in their countries. This legislation should be in line with existing export control regimes and its application should be sufficiently transparent for the international community.

Fourth, the unilateral moratoria on nuclear testing declared by India and Pakistan, although a first positive step, are not sufficient. They must be made irreversible by legally binding commitments. We urge both States to sign the CTBT without preconditions and without delay.

Fifth, negotiations should be started rapidly on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). It would be the next logical step on the road to the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, as set out in the declaration on "Principles and objectives" of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Such a treaty would make no distinction between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. It would have to be universally applicable and constrain all parties equally. Thus it would constitute a major contribution both to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. In fact, nuclear disarmament cannot be made effectively verifiable and irreversible, without addressing the problem of fissile material production and stockpiles. In this context, we welcome the unilateral steps and bilateral agreements by nuclear-weapon States to stop further production of fissile material and to apply IAEA safeguards to excess material.

Germany calls on this Conference to agree to establish during this session an ad hoc committee based on the Shannon report and its mandate. We ask India and Pakistan to join such an agreement. We know that there are differences of view on certain substantive issues. But these differences should not hold up agreement on setting up an ad hoc group. Rather, they should be settled during negotiations. For their duration, India and Pakistan should consider a moratorium on the production of fissile material.

(Mr. Hartmann, Germany)

In this context, I have listened with great interest to the statement just made by the representative of Pakistan. I welcome the decision by the Pakistani Government to support the immediate commencement of negotiations on a cut-off treaty. I would hope that essentially it will contribute to the solution of the problems which I have just described. I should like to ask you, Mr. President, to initiate early consultations on the question of setting up an ad hoc committee on the basis of the Shannon mandate.

Sixth, the process of nuclear disarmament must proceed with the ultimate goal of completely eliminating nuclear weapons, as set out in the "Principles and objectives" of 1995. The primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament lies with the nuclear-weapon States, in particular those with the largest arsenals. In this context, Germany remains convinced that continuation of the START process is the realistic avenue for nuclear disarmament, and urges that the next necessary steps are taken without further delay.

Nevertheless, it is our view that the other members of this Conference should also be able to participate actively in a substantive discussion on all relevant aspects of the nuclear issue. A number of useful proposals have been made by Japan, South Africa, Belgium and Canada which merit further active consideration. We attach great importance to your consultations, Mr. President, which will hopefully prepare the ground both for stand-alone cut-off negotiations and for a mechanism which will allow a full discussion of all other issues related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

At the same time, Germany welcomes the resumption of the work on negative security assurances and is also advocating the resumption of work on questions concerning outer space. Future renewed discussions should reflect on possibilities of channelling developments in space technology in a way which would strengthen security and stability in outer space and avoid destabilizing effects by means of confidence-building measures.

While the nuclear issue is of overriding importance for the CD at this juncture, some other disarmament topics are of equally great interest in a Geneva context. Allow me to review them briefly with you.

Germany is strongly committed to the strengthening of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention by means of a verification regime. Preventing these heinous weapons ever being used is a fundamental aspiration of mankind. Today we can say that as a result of the endeavours undertaken, especially by the EU, the Ad Hoc Group negotiations have reached a crucial stage. The control of biological weapons could be within reach if an intensification of the negotiations is agreed upon as soon as possible.

A large number of important and complex issues remain to be solved. But we are confident that the political will and imagination necessary to develop an effective BW verification regime exist. Germany will spare no efforts to contribute to this objective and will give all her support to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion at an early date.

(Mr. Hartmann, Germany)

The CD in our view has long failed to adequately address conventional weapons. One cannot ignore the fact that in recent years an increasing number of subregional and internal conflicts have taken place in which small arms and light weapons, as well as anti-personnel landmines, have become major tools of violence. Their indiscriminate use against civilians in particular has been cause for serious humanitarian concern.

Germany has consistently supported the goal of a complete ban on anti-personnel landmines (APLs). At the beginning of the Geneva Conference on Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in April 1996, Germany unilaterally declared her renunciation of APLs. We welcome the upcoming entry into force of amended Protocol II following submission of the twentieth instrument of ratification.

But the complete ban envisaged by the Ottawa Convention remains the most comprehensive and credible answer to the humanitarian problems caused by APLs. Germany together with France submitted its instrument of ratification to the United Nations Secretary-General on 23 July.

The primordial task is now to make acceptance of the Ottawa Convention or its objectives as universal as possible. We are aware that a number of States, including some large military Powers and major regional Powers with huge APL stockpiles and significant production capabilities, have decided not to adhere to the Ottawa Convention immediately. Many of them, however, have expressed their willingness to contribute to the resolution of the humanitarian aims of the Ottawa Convention by banning APL transfers. Germany therefore strongly supports the establishment of an ad hoc committee on APLs by the CD and an early start to negotiations on a universal ban on APL transfers. We should like to emphasize here that this agreement will have to be fully compatible with the Ottawa Convention and that it must not detract from its objectives.

Small arms and light weapons are the principal tools of violence in the conflicts of our times; hundreds of thousands of people are killed or mutilated by them every year. The international community must respond as a matter or urgency by countering the threat they pose to international peace and stability. Germany is grateful for the assistance provided by the United Nations Secretary-General to the Panel of Governmental Experts under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Donowaki. We welcome and endorse the panel's report and recommendations.

Germany advocates a twin-track approach, providing both for reactive and preventive measures. Reactive measures should aim at effectively collecting and destroying surplus weapons in crisis areas, especially in regions emerging from conflict. Germany supports the United Nations Disarmament Commission's work in aiming to establish adequate guidelines on such practical disarmament measures by spring 1999. Preventive measures should in the medium to long term scale down countries' stockpiles of small arms to a level that corresponds to their legitimate security interests and, at the same time, dry up the sources of uncontrolled supplies to crisis areas.

(Mr. Hartmann, Germany)

Germany supports the United Nations expert panel's recommendation of convening an international conference on the illicit arms trade "in all its aspects". In this context, regional incremental approaches could serve as suitable stepping stones in the direction of an international convention. The CD, in our view, should review whether it could be of assistance in bringing about this objective.

Transparency is another field in which global approaches can provide an adequate response to global and regional security concerns. In Europe we experienced during the cold war that political fears and tensions were able to grow as long as military capabilities and activities remained cloaked in excessive secrecy. The concept of transparency in military matters developed and put into practice in the 1970s and 1980s has largely contributed to making Europe more stable and secure. Against this background, we advocate the CD's decision to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency and also its consideration of a code of conduct on international arms transfers.

I would like to conclude by saying that in spite of present appearances the Conference on Disarmament continues to have an important role to play in a worldwide context. Much work remains to be done. Therefore, procedural squabbles which hamper the progress of active work should be overcome and linkages between unrelated issues avoided. What we need is the political will for action which will allow the Conference to contribute productively towards making the world a safer place.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Germany for his important statement and for the kind words addressed to my country and the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria, Ambassador Dembri.

Mr. DEMBRI (Algeria) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me first of all to tell you how pleased the Algerian delegation is to see you presiding over the work of our Conference. Your personal skills, your status as the representative of a country which has voluntarily renounced nuclear weapons, give you particular prestige. Furthermore, your delegation and many others which until recently simply had the status of observer can today greatly enrich our work and contribute to furthering it: that is what you are doing now in an outstanding manner, and we thank you for it.

This year our Conference has been able to provide itself with negotiating machinery - and these are all positive signals - by establishing an ad hoc committee on security guarantees, a set of mechanisms for consultations dealing simultaneously with nuclear disarmament, anti-personnel mines, outer space, transparency in armaments and what we commonly call the reform of the CD, that is, the revision of its agenda, the improvement of its functioning and the expansion of its membership. Today I wish to refer to the consultations which you yourself, Mr. President, and the two other members of the troika are responsible for conducting on item 1 of our agenda. In this respect the Algerian delegation, while welcoming the work already done, firmly encourages you to pursue your consultations and assures you of its full support.

(Mr. Dembri, Algeria)

The consultations under way on item 1 of our agenda have highlighted the elementary truths which should seamlessly underpin consensus on this issue, if they were accepted by all of us, and the Algerian delegation in this respect notes that a solution can very quickly be found if the following guiding principles are rationally adopted as a basis of work. First, non-proliferation and disarmament are two inseparable dimensions which should be treated together and in parallel. Second, non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament in truth contain, in a corollary and linked way, the objective and the measures leading to it. Third, non-proliferation makes disarmament possible and disarmament strengthens and completes non-proliferation.

On the basis of these principles, and after listening carefully to the statements made by different delegations, after conducting a lengthy assessment of the political implications and the security imperatives emerging from the examination of this question, the Algerian delegation considers it useful, in a spirit of synthesis, to enrich the proposals submitted up to now by means of a new proposal intended first and foremost to open further the avenues of thought, renew the method of approach and thus nourish and facilitate the debates which should collectively bring us to a decision. In this respect, this new initiative should be understood as an action complementary to those already registered here in the CD, which have been mentioned by many speakers this morning, actions which have been embodied in outlines for decisions submitted individually or collectively by delegations, outlines whose existence we welcome and whose merits and advantages we recognize.

The ideas contained in the Algerian proposal, submitted today for your judgement, as well as the approach suggested therein, are not in fact very different from those already expressed. It is their presentation and their structure which are new: they form a possible synthesis and therefore a possible compromise. This is a document which really is open to compromise and not to confrontation. It should therefore be seen as a vector of dialogue and negotiation, which alone can remove lack of understanding or misunderstandings and finally reveal how to overcome the blockages of all kinds which have so far prevented the emergence of a solution which is beneficial and acceptable to everybody. The Algerian proposal is also an open synthesis based on the broadest and most commonly accepted lines of interpretation, a synthesis which fits into a context of durability and a logic which harmonizes and reconciles the imperatives of necessary adaptations by all parties and the constraints arising from current circumstances that are inherent in the preoccupations of each of the parties.

Allow me to present it briefly. In fact it consists of a twin proposal relating to the creation of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament and an ad hoc committee on prohibition of the production of fissile material, thereby going beyond the acute dilemma and the reiterative question of the interpretation of the content of item 1 of the agenda of the CD: should we address nuclear disarmament and, within it, the prohibition of fissile material? Should we exclusively address the prohibition of fissile material or solely nuclear disarmament? In truth, the Conference on Disarmament should be able to address both questions. The first ad hoc committee should be able

(Mr. Dembri, Algeria)

to negotiate a convention committing all States to the objective of nuclear disarmament and, as far as we know, no State here has stated that it does not subscribe to this objective. It should also be able to identify measures leading to the objective, with the exception of the prohibition of fissile material, which, because it has already been identified and is therefore ripe for negotiation, would be dealt with in a second ad hoc committee. This second committee has the task of launching the negotiations on a clear basis that is free from any misunderstanding, which will already give us an assurance of work to be accomplished in a clear and harmonious manner, and therefore likely to be concluded successfully. The proposed mandate brings together the concerns expressed by various delegations on the scope and area of application of the future convention, expressly including the question of stockpiles while maintaining the flexibility which is necessary for negotiation.

In making this proposal and explaining it in advance to all the delegations, the Algerian delegation was aware that some delegations would find merit in it, others would detect scope for improving its drafting, and others still would find conceptual problems in it. This is to be expected, but in no way detracts from our objective and our ambition to enrich the discussion, to help the President in his current consultations and to stimulate the collective effort to achieve synthesis, in order to place it in the field of positive utopia, which means, after all, the field of the possible.

This being so, I would like to state that for the Algerian delegation the NPT remains the backbone and the keystone of the non-proliferation regime, and that there is no question of challenging the concepts or general organization of that regime. On the contrary, we must preserve it, and the best way of doing so is to build on it a regime of nuclear disarmament, which we must admit it has thus far been incapable of promoting.

I would also like to state that, through this twin proposal, the reference to the Shannon report is very strong and very firm. From our standpoint it is out of the question for any further negotiations to take place on this report, which has already given rise to a consensus. What is involved is to make an effort to pinpoint and delimit the contents of that report in order to encourage the opening of negotiations on a clear and unequivocal basis taking account of all the concerns expressed in that very report.

Finally, I would like to state that the Algerian conception of disarmament remains of course what we have always maintained together with the other members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, confirmed very recently in Cartagena during the meeting held at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. This twin proposal, annexed to the statement I am making today, is also accompanied by a background paper designed to explain its motivations and objectives. I would be grateful if the secretariat would

(Mr. Dembri, Algeria)

publish it and have it circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament, so that all the delegations can assess it and examine it. The Algerian delegation will be happy to be available to them for any consultation on this subject.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to my country and to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Austria, Ambassador Kreid.

Mr. KREID (Austria): Mr. President, let me first of all express to you my congratulations on the assumption of your functions. You have already demonstrated your ability and dedication to the cause of guiding this Conference at a particularly critical moment of its existence. Let me assure you that you can count on our full support in your endeavours.

As we meet to start our last sessional period of 1998, the disquieting question uppermost in our minds is whether we are here to discuss nuclear disarmament in the face of a nuclear arms race. Weapons of mass destruction are, by definition, a threat transcending regional boundaries. They are, by definition, of concern to all of us. While indeed they may have regional root causes, they have global implications of the first magnitude.

The outcry against the recent test explosions is understandable. It is motivated by concern about the future of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It is motivated by fear that nuclear arms might be considered as a normal and integral part of a nation's arsenal to bolster its security aspirations. It is motivated by the need to dispel the fallacy of security gains from nuclear armament. Indeed, this flexing of the nuclear muscle is an anachronism in a post-cold war environment which has improved the chances of reducing and ultimately eliminating nuclear arms.

Can we still hope to turn the tables and transform the nuclear arms race into a "nuclear disarmament race"? It is no great insight to state that nuclear weapons are, technologically speaking, old-fashioned. If we look at recent military conflicts, nuclear weapons appear blunt, indiscriminate, even primitive, a left-over from a violent age when they were used to end a world conflagration. But they appear strangely out of place in our age of information systems, satellite surveillance, computer-based data collection and highly sophisticated conventional weapons that can be pinpointed and targeted with precision.

We are witnesses to how nuclear-weapons arsenals constitute a major embarrassment to those who own them. The cost of maintenance and safeguarding proves to be a considerable burden for national budgets. The cost of disarming and destroying nuclear material even proves to be beyond the means of some governments. A government which opts for a course of nuclear armament should be aware of the staggering costs involved, which could be put to better use for the well-being of its people. What do you gain from endowing yourself with nuclear weapons if your opponent follows suit? You are, at best, back to square one, after having incurred heavy expenses. At worst, you are courting,

(Mr. Kreid, Austria)

instead of a possible conventional conflict - bad enough as this may be - a nuclear conflagration. For all practical purposes, you may find yourself in the situation we have come to describe as a "balance of terror". This balance prevents any movement on, and by the same token, any solution to, the original conflict. In other words, the issues become even more intractable than before - hardly an attractive option.

The overriding question is how to close the door to any temptation for nuclear proliferation anywhere around the globe. In order to do this, we need to bring all countries into the mainstream of our contractual system. And in this context, let me applaud the decision by the Government of Brazil, of which Ambassador Lafer has just informed the CD. We are convinced that the security interests of those countries which have remained aloof would be best served if they proceeded to the adoption of all of the main instruments of the nuclear arms regime and joined the rest of the CD members in an FMCT negotiation. We are convinced that this logic cannot fail to attract the attention of policy makers in New Delhi and Islamabad. Having satisfied themselves of their nuclear capabilities, the two countries can hardly be interested in entering into a spiral of nuclear weapons competition. Austria believes therefore that this is a propitious moment for getting negotiations under way in the CD, all the more so after having listened this morning to the statement of the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan. We welcome its constructive spirit and think that it significantly enhances our chances of coming to an agreement on a negotiating mandate for FMCT.

While to some it may appear that we have wasted precious time in not formally establishing such an ad hoc negotiating committee on cut-off, we tend to think that, nevertheless, some valuable preparatory work has been achieved. Negotiations are not merely the business of treaty-making. They include - indeed they require - preliminary exploration, testing of common ground, consensus-building, in a gradual, often seemingly haphazard process. Viewed in this light, our exchanges on nuclear disarmament and FMCT during the last months have been useful stepping stones towards a treaty that looms large, if still somewhat hazy, on the horizon.

But then, it might be argued, we were already there in 1995, with the adoption of the Shannon mandate and the formal establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on FMCT, and have been treading water ever since. This may be true, but in fact the time for negotiation was not ripe in 1995, in part because the CD was then focusing on the CTBT. This, of course, does not explain our dallying in 1997. If our stalemate of last year was sometimes euphemistically described as the well-deserved pause for breath of exhausted negotiators, we know, in fact, that the real reason was another: the FMCT had been taken hostage by delegations who were desirous of achieving more far-reaching results in the area of nuclear disarmament. This was, as far as we are concerned, a perfectly honourable, if unsuccessful, attempt to force the hands of reluctant nuclear-weapon States and make them more responsive to the need for transparency and the participation of the non-nuclear-weapon States, who rightly consider themselves directly affected by what happens and what does not happen in nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Kreid, Austria)

Let me reiterate Austria's position with regard to this subject. We advocate the establishment of a mechanism which permits keeping the issue of general nuclear disarmament under constant and systematic review in the CD. An essential function of such a mechanism would be to prepare the ground for further clearly circumscribed areas of multilateral negotiations. At the same time, we do not believe that we should postpone a cut-off negotiation until we have reached agreement on how to handle the more encompassing concept of nuclear disarmament in the CD.

Do we have a better chance of reaching an agreement on FMCT? We hope so. A sober analysis of the post-South-Asian-test situation must lead us to the conclusion that action is required now, that confidence in the process of nuclear disarmament must be demonstrated by launching negotiations which will result in another contractual regime

We should not allow this chance to pass by unused. We should use the next days to explore vigorously existing common ground and then move quickly into a formal process of negotiations. In doing so, it might be useful to state or restate certain things.

An FMCT would not be a discriminatory instrument. It affects all States alike, whether they are inside or outside the NPT regime. As we see it, an FMCT will not distinguish between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, and thus will not create several categories of States adhering to it.

An FMCT is the logical next step on the nuclear disarmament agenda. And we rest assured that it will not be the final multilateral instrument to be adopted. It will be crucial in our efforts to wean the world from its addiction to nuclear weapons.

An FMCT is, strictly speaking, not in itself an instrument of disarmament since no single warhead will be dismantled because of it, and the quantity of fissile material available for nuclear arms will be frozen at its current level. But then it can just as well be argued that the CTBT was not a disarmament treaty either since it did not result in the reduction of nuclear installations - apart from the test sites, to be sure. Yet, and quite justly so, the 1995 NPT Conference included an FMCT as a second step in its programme of action for nuclear disarmament since it was considered indispensable to cap nuclear arsenals.

An FMCT might well have additional beneficial effects. Given the need for an adequate verification system, transparency on existing nuclear weapons material will inevitably be greatly enhanced. Thus, we see the treaty as a potential first step towards an international control regime on nuclear weapons, a vital tool in overcoming resistance to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Once an FMCT has been adopted, there would be a reasonable chance that the main nuclear-weapon States would commit themselves voluntarily to placing

(Mr. Kreid, Austria)

irreversible fissile material transferred from military uses to civilian ones under full IAEA safeguards. This would constitute a welcome bonus to be reaped from an agreement on cut-off.

Finally, let us not forget that an FMCT has important implications for the non-proliferation regime since it reduces the differences between the obligations of nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, thus mitigating a situation of inequality which has been irksome to many governments. With an FMCT in place, the non-proliferation treaty regime would thus be strengthened inasmuch as governments will feel its burdens and obligations to be less one-sided.

Negotiating an FMCT responds to the incremental approach, which means that even small changes in the security environment will lead to further advances that cannot be anticipated. As we move along the trail of nuclear disarmament, new vistas will open up around each bend and what was deemed unfeasible before will become a real option to pursue. This then would be a further contribution of an FMCT: that it edges us on and provides the momentum for future advances.

We have, of course, our views on how to approach the thorny issues of scope, verification or entry into force of such a treaty, but we honestly do not believe that this is the proper moment to expound on them. These questions will inevitably arise once we embark on concrete discussions on a treaty text. Much has already been said and written over the years on these subjects, and I believe that we can usefully use many of these ideas when the time comes. Our immediate task, however, is to take a decision on getting started as soon as possible. In this context I should like to refer to draft decision CD/1492 which Austria, on 3 February of this year, put before this Conference proposing the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. I think the time has come to take action on this proposal and I should like to appeal to you, Mr. President, to do everything required to steer the Conference towards a decision in the course of this session. In particular, I should like to suggest that you should consider convening an informal plenary meeting this coming Monday, which would permit us to carry out a thorough evaluation of where we stand on this issue.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Austria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I take note of his initiative. I now call on the representative of Spain, Ambassador Martínez Morcillo.

Mr. MARTINEZ MORCILLO (Spain) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, I would like to start my last statement to the Conference on Disarmament by expressing satisfaction and congratulations at seeing you in the Chair, and in doing so I cannot refrain from introducing a note of nostalgia in my statement, nostalgia which you evoked, Sir, in your kind words addressed to me when you recalled the time when the delegations of Ukraine and Spain were struggling together to enter this Conference as members. I was then able to

(Mr. Martínez Morcillo, Spain)

appreciate the interest and energy of the Ukrainian delegation, just as now I am appreciating this presence with the undoubted diplomatic elegance with which you are performing your task. The Chair now enjoys the full trust and support of the Spanish delegation.

I think it was the French writer André Maurois who said: "Il n'y a pas de civilisation sans cérémonie". This Conference on Disarmament, whose civilized character cannot be questioned, also has its ceremonial, including the custom that heads of delegation make a valedictory statement when they are about to leave. A lawyer can never be sure whether that custom meets the requirements for becoming a peremptory norm of international law. I must admit that this doubt is due to a professional bias. Obviously, the answer is no. There is no obligatory custom along these lines, especially on account of the fact that there are significant exceptions to the custom. But a Chinese proverb with all the wisdom of ancient Chinese civilization, says that after all is said and done, "protocol is the smoke of friendship".

Mr. President, allow me in this chamber where smoking is forbidden, but from which wisps of cigarette smoke can often be seen rising in the air, allow me from the seat of the Spanish delegation to blow a strong spiral of thick smoke at this formal moment of my leave-taking. Although it would be difficult to say that this is the smoke of friendship, I am sure that it can rise at least as a mark of my deep esteem and affection for the Conference on Disarmament. Just as I have heard it repeated here ad nauseam in this forum that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole negotiating body for disarmament, I have also heard many times that the Conference is the best club in Geneva. I do not believe this, and so for the first time and also the last, I am going to exercise my right as a member of the Conference on Disarmament to block any such decision. I oppose considering this Conference as the best club in Geneva. I could not subscribe to an opinion which saw the Conference on Disarmament first and foremost as a club of friends. After all is said and done this Conference comes across all too often, on account of the simple action of the rule of consensus, as a mere gathering of loners.

No, the Conference on Disarmament is not the best club in Geneva. The Conference on Disarmament is much more than this, and in saying so I do not wish to be disparaging about any of the excellent clubs that exist beyond the left bank of Lake Geneva and the river Rhone. The Greek classics said that love is knowledge. The difficult knowledge that little by little produces the repeated movement of the workings of the Conference on Disarmament has, after four intensive years as a watchful spectator, produced in me first of all a feeling of astonished appreciation. Afterwards, eventually, there comes affection for an institution that shows a never-ending capacity for the unexpected and for ever greater challenges.

The least that can be said about this Conference is that, in the wide gamut of examples that multilateral diplomacy has offered throughout history, it will go down as a very singular body on account of its very special working procedures and techniques. But I would like to say something more positive about it. And to say this I think it would be best to recall the days when I attended the final phase of negotiating the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban

(Mr. Martínez Morcillo, Spain)

Treaty, in which the Conference appeared to me as a machine operating almost perfectly with its technical and political wheels turning, where one did not know whether to admire more the excellence and perfection of its basic premises or the subtle skill in achieving results through compromise in its relentless progress. Progress that perhaps was not an expression of perfection but which was a masterpiece in the art of the possible. And that is what I wish to indicate today as a definition of this Conference, which in the past has offered sufficient proof that it is capable of advancing to the maximum in the realm of what is possible at any moment.

In recalling those days in which I lived intensely sitting on the observers' benches, in sitting now among the members of the Conference, I only hope that it will be able to overcome the present stumbling blocks, its old ghosts that are still with us - that it will embark again on the splendid highway of the past and, with renewed displays of its technical capacity and its political realism, will arrive at tangible, important results that will be further milestones on the international community's path towards fairer and more balanced forms of coexistence.

I believe it would be unnecessary to recall now how the delegation of Spain has repeated throughout the past two years its position that, without disregarding other issues, it considers that there are two which are ripe for negotiation. These issues, as you well know, are the cessation of the production of fissile material and anti-personnel mines. I won't repeat the argument now. But I would like to say again that we understand that they are ready for negotiation because they have the dual characteristic of being desirable and appropriate both in the field of disarmament and from the point of view of what is feasible; in making this assertion I refer both to the political elements and to the factual ones, which together would set the scene for negotiations on such issues.

In that regard, I would like to underline the great care with which we listened to the statement made today by the Ambassador of Pakistan, as we have always done. And in the same context, I would like to support the request made to you by the British Ambassador, also endorsed by the German Commissioner and the Ambassador of Austria, to take steps as soon as possible which will lead to the speedy initiation of negotiations on the cut-off issue. In that regard, I call particular attention to the proposal that has just been made by the representative of Austria.

If in one set of circumstances or another in which I might find myself in the future it reaches my ears that the Conference has started such negotiations, not only will I feel personal satisfaction at seeing my mission accomplished, but I will also be able to note that my affection for this Conference is justified as being a body that is able to accommodate the two approaches that the theoreticians of international relations tell us provide the framework for such relations: idealism and realism. The Conference should continue to be the body that strives towards the highest ideals with its feet firmly on the ground, with a realistic view of what is possible at a given moment.

(Mr. Martínez Morcillo, Spain)

I cannot hide the fact that in the lengthy process of studying the Conference I have had to read the rules of procedure, that sometimes elusive and ambiguous text, many times. To conclude my statement I would like to pay tribute to rule No. 9. I am not going to read it out now. You all know that it is the rule that governs the rotation of Presidents. Consequently it is the formal basis which enables all the delegates to circulate around this room. Rule No. 9 is associated in my case with the mostly painfully sad moments in my time in this Conference. But it has also enabled me many times, and from all possible angles, to look upwards and see the details of the murals which adorn this chamber. These murals belong to a moment and to artistic concepts of bygone days: muralism and the death throes of art deco. But a Spaniard can never forget that they were Spain's gift to this Palais des Nations at a very difficult moment in its history as the expression of Spain's faith in the need for the rule of law as the prime inspiration of international political life.

In looking at the pictures I have identified many familiar figures: the tower of the old university of Salamanca, the forms that are so characteristic of the sixteenth century in Spain. But above all I noted that this gift from Spain to this building, offered on condition that the Council Chamber was called the Francisco de Vitoria Chamber, which unfortunately has not been done, is the expression of a political will on the part of Spain which has always persisted and which I have had the honour of serving as the delegate of Spain in the Conference on Disarmament. The fact that these four years of my presence in Geneva have been divided into two years as an observer of what the others were doing, and another two years as a spectator of what the others were not doing, is another story that I will tell another day.

I would like my last words to be words of thanks to the entire secretariat of the Conference. First of all its Secretary-General, Mr. Petrovsky, for his work as the driving force and custodian of its proceedings. And in general to all the members of the secretariat at all levels and in all its branches, among which I am going to leave good friends behind. I must make a special mention of the effective and skilful work of the interpreters. And it would be unjust if I were not to recall the role of the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Bensmail, in whom I always found precise information or appropriate advice.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Spain for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair, and I would like to reiterate our wishes for success and happiness. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ambassador Campbell.

Mr. CAMPBELL (Australia): The immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty is among Australia's highest priorities for action in the Conference on Disarmament.

An FMCT is a long-standing objective of the international non-proliferation and disarmament agenda. It is the logical next step following the conclusion of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty.

(Mr. Campbell, Australia)

There is strong international support for negotiations on an FMCT. The international community committed itself to the immediate commencement of FMCT negotiations in 1995 at the NPT Review and Extension Conference.

There is an agreed mandate, the mandate and report of Special Coordinator Ambassador Shannon adopted by the Conference on Disarmament in 1995, waiting to be activated.

The recent nuclear tests in South Asia have given a further impetus to the need for an immediate start to negotiations on an FMCT.

The tests challenge the global norms embodied in the Nuclear-Non-Proliferation and Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaties.

The international community is looking to the member States of the Conference on Disarmament for a constructive response to these challenges. In this context, Australia welcomes the statement by the Indian Government on 11 May indicating its willingness to engage in negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Equally, we warmly welcome the commitment made in Ambassador Akram's statement to the Conference on Disarmament this morning that Pakistan is willing to work with others to promote negotiations on a universal, non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable FMCT, on the basis of the Shannon report and mandate. It is a matter of considerable significance for the disarmament community and international efforts in pursuit of nuclear disarmament. We look forward to working closely with delegations in this Conference towards what might indeed be what Ambassador Akram describes as "a critical turning point".

At this stage, when there is a premium on sending the right signal to the world, we should proceed as quickly as possible to launch FMCT negotiations on the basis of what is already agreed, and we support the call just made by Ambassador Kreid this morning that there be an informal CD plenary early next week to consider ways in which we can do that.

A decision by this Conference to establish a committee which could begin negotiations on a cut-off treaty would send a clear signal that effective action is being taken to counter the threat to the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime posed by the tests. It would demonstrate in a very concrete way that the regime, despite claims to the contrary, is alive and in business. It would also demonstrate to an increasingly sceptical world that the CD itself is alive and in business.

Launching FMCT negotiations would enable all member States of the Conference to demonstrate in a positive, forward-looking and concrete way their commitment to the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, and to a practical way forward towards our shared goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Campbell, Australia)

We should avoid linkages with other issues which will only serve to delay and complicate the launching of negotiations.

A fissile material cut-off treaty has the potential to deliver significant national, regional and international security benefits and would constitute an essential and necessary step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons by: building on the CTBT and consolidating the legally binding, verifiable, qualitative cessation of the nuclear arms race achieved by the CTBT; bringing all nuclear facilities capable of producing fissile material for use in nuclear weapons in all States, including those States recognized by the NPT as possessing nuclear weapons and non-NPT States possessing fissile material production facilities, under legally binding international nuclear safeguards, thereby helping to redress any perceived imbalance of rights and obligations between the nuclear-weapon States and the non-nuclear weapon States in the NPT; reinforcing the international norm against the possession, acquisition and use, or threat of use, of nuclear weapons already embodied in the NPT and reinforced by the CTBT; creating a security climate which is conducive towards the dismantling of their nuclear arsenals by the nuclear-weapon States and towards the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons by creating greater transparency and confidence about the capabilities as well as the intentions of countries with fissile material production facilities; and establishing a central and indispensable element in any verification regime for a world free of nuclear weapons.

While an FMCT is a long-standing, widely supported, logical next step on the international non-proliferation and disarmament agenda, there is no denying that the nuclear tests in South Asia have changed the international security environment. To remain relevant in this changed environment, the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime needs to respond creatively to the new realities. FMCT has accordingly assumed a new significance and a more urgent relevance.

The fact remains that two member States of this Conference, acting on the basis of their assessments of their national security imperatives, conducted a series of nuclear tests in May this year. Australia does not subscribe to the assessments which led to the tests. Nor do we believe that the testing of nuclear devices was the right response to their security concerns, real or perceived. Indeed, we consider that the national security interests of both countries, their regional neighbours and the international community generally have suffered as a result of those tests. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that India and Pakistan, like every other member of this Conference, have their national security interests to protect and we are realistic and pragmatic enough to consider that these interests have to be taken into account. We cannot hope to make progress towards agreement on effective multilateral arms control agreements on the basis of the denial of the national security imperatives which determine the positions which individual delegations take in our deliberations.

Australia recognizes the national security concerns underlying Ambassador Akram's interventions on 11 June, in which he raised questions

(Mr. Campbell, Australia)

about the definition of nuclear-weapon-State status in the aftermath of the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan the previous month. Ambassador Akram's questions deserve a response.

For Australia's part, we consider that, through a number of statements in different forums, the international community has clearly indicated its view that, notwithstanding their testing of nuclear weapons, India and Pakistan could not have the status of nuclear-weapon States. This view has been stated most clearly in United Nations Security Council resolution 1172.

Australia considers that the definition of a nuclear-weapon State derives from article IX (3) of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. However, a nuclear-weapon State is not simply a State which exploded a nuclear device before 1 January 1967: it is also a State which is recognized as having assumed particular rights and obligations in international law, including accepting formal undertakings to cease the nuclear arms race and eliminate nuclear weapons from their national arsenals; not to assist non-nuclear-weapon States to acquire nuclear weapons; and not to use nuclear weapons against parties to the nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties. These facts are not altered by the conduct of nuclear tests by India and Pakistan.

Recognition of India and Pakistan as nuclear-weapon States could no more result from negotiations for an FMCT than Indian and Pakistani adherence to the CTBT would result in a change in their nuclear-weapon-State status. Firstly, and most obviously, an FMCT would not confer recognition on States possessing nuclear weapons outside the NPT as nuclear-weapon States because it would not address the issue of nuclear weapons possession as such: it would only concern itself with the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons.

Secondly, broad political support for an FMCT hinges on its characterization as a "non-discriminatory" treaty. This description is an integral element of United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/75 L and the Shannon report and mandate which were based on resolution 48/75 L. A non-discriminatory FMCT in its simplest form - establishing a verified prohibition on the current and future production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons - would impose similar obligations on all parties, whether they be NPT NWS, NNWS or non-NPT parties.

In adopting the Shannon mandate and report in 1995 the member States of this Conference committed themselves to negotiating a non-discriminatory FMCT. In this, the Conference was reflecting the will of the international community as expressed in the consensus United Nations General Assembly resolution on FMCT which had also called for a non-discriminatory treaty. The term "non-discriminatory", as we understand it, harks back to the differing obligations incurred by States parties to the NPT, based on their nuclear-weapon status. There are many perspectives on what an FMCT should look like, and we expect these issues to be raised and addressed once negotiations are launched. However, we expect the negotiators of an FMCT to adhere to this basic undertaking and not to discriminate between States on the

(Mr. Campbell, Australia)

basis of their nuclear-weapon status. It is States' relationship to fissile material and not pre-existing nuclear-weapon status which is the appropriate source of obligations under an FMCT.

Finally, Australia does not subscribe to the view that, because it would be unusual, if not unprecedented, for the CD to establish an ad hoc committee in the third part of the annual session of the Conference, this is an inflexible rule binding us for all time. Traditionally, this Conference devotes the third part of its sessions to preparing its report to the United Nations General Assembly. There is nothing however that precludes us doing this as well as taking the important step - important for both symbolic and substantive reasons - of establishing an ad hoc committee to negotiate an FMCT during this session. Indeed, a decision to establish - finally - an ad hoc committee would be a highlight of an otherwise jejune account of what we have achieved here in 1998. We therefore urge all members of this Conference to agree forthwith to the adoption of the draft decision tabled by Austria on 3 February 1998 on the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (CD/1492), in accordance with the 1995 Shannon report and the mandate contained therein.

Mr. SANCHEZ ARNAU (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, first of all allow me to express my delegation's pleasure at seeing you in the Chair and to assure you that you will have its full support in the discharge of your difficult functions at this stage in the activities of the Conference.

I shall make this statement on behalf of the Governments of Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. We wish to introduce to you in this Conference on Disarmament on this occasion the political declaration of Mercosur (which comprises Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) plus Bolivia and Chile, signed on the occasion of the fourteenth summit of Mercosur Presidents, held in Ushuaia on 24 July 1998 with the participation of the heads of State of the six countries and in the presence of the President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, who had been especially invited on this occasion.

This Ushuaia Declaration reflects the renewed spirit of friendship and cooperation that underpins relations among the countries of our region, which are united by cooperation and safe from the risks of an arms race which, in the context of integration in which we are currently engaged, we consider totally unjustified. Through the above-mentioned declaration, our Governments, convinced that peace is the main desire of our peoples and forms the basis of their development, declared the region of Mercosur plus Bolivia and Chile as a zone of peace, free from weapons of mass destruction. As a part of this declaration our Presidents agreed to strengthen the mechanisms for consultation and cooperation on matters of security and defence that exist between the member countries and promote growing linkages between them; to further cooperation in the areas of confidence-building and security-building measures and promote their implementation; to make progress towards the realization of a zone free from anti-personnel landmines in Mercosur plus Bolivia and Chile; to reaffirm their commitment to broaden and systematize the

(Mr. Sánchez Arnau, Argentina)

information that they provide to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and establish a uniform methodology to provide information on military expenditure, with a view to increasing transparency and fostering confidence in this area; to support in the relevant international forums the full application and the strengthening of instruments and mechanisms for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; and to make concerted efforts in international forums to make headway in the context of a gradual and systematic process to consolidate international agreements designed to attain the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects.

As agreed by our Presidents, we would like to request that the above-mentioned declaration be distributed as an official document of the Conference. We are convinced that with this declaration and the measures taken in pursuance of it, we are once again demonstrating the will of our countries to grow in peace and in democracy. By way of confirmation, on the same occasion, our Presidents adopted the Ushuaia Protocol on democratic commitment, which calls for the full effectiveness of democratic institutions as a precondition of the development of the integration processes in which the six signatory countries are engaged.

Secondly, I also wish to express the deep satisfaction of the Argentine Government at the announcement that has been made at this meeting by the delegation of Brazil with regard to its country's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. These are two significant steps on the road to the strengthening of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament to which we cannot fail to pay tribute in the framework of this Conference. This welcome decision adopted by the Government of Brazil merely strengthens the policy agreed by our Presidents for the realization of a zone of peace in the region.

Finally, and on behalf of our delegation alone, we wish to join in the welcome extended in this chamber to the important decision reached by the Governments of Pakistan and the United States to support the prompt commencement of negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable convention on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices, and to promote the establishment of an ad hoc committee at this session of the Conference, in order to negotiate that convention, in accordance with the Shannon report and the mandate contained in it, an objective that our country fully shares.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Argentina for his statement and the kind words he addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa, Mr. Goosen.

Mr. GOOSEN (South Africa): I have requested the floor today to bring to the attention of the Conference South Africa's ratification of three important international instruments in the disarmament and humanitarian law field, namely, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production

(Mr. Goosen, South Africa)

and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (the Ottawa treaty), as well as the amended Protocol II and Protocol IV of the Convention on the Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, commonly known as the CCW. The South African Parliament gave its assent to the ratification of these three agreements, and the relevant instruments of ratification were deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 26 June 1998.

South Africa considers its ratification of these instruments to be particularly significant. By taking these steps we have effected the elimination of an entire range of weapons from the arsenal of our armed forces, and in so doing ensured that we will not contribute to the indiscriminate devastation which these weapons wreak upon innocent civilian populations. In this regard it may be useful for me also to recall that South Africa completed the destruction of its stockpile of anti-personnel landmines on 30 October 1997. By this action, and by ratifying these treaties, South Africa has brought itself into line with what is widely considered to be the international norm for dealing with these weapons.

Having now completed the necessary legal steps with regard to both the Ottawa treaty and the amended Protocol II of the CCW, South Africa will continue to actively work for other signatories to the two instruments to do the same. We will also work hard for the universalization of the treaties and the realization of the demining and mine victim assistance aspects of the Ottawa treaty in particular. At the signing ceremony of the Ottawa treaty in December 1997, Foreign Minister Nzo said:

> "The major issue that needs urgent attention is the task of coordination and removal of the millions of emplaced landmines which are causing thousands of casualties each year and the priority of mine victims who must receive adequate medical attention and rehabilitation, as well as social and economic reintegration. These elements are interdependent and need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner."

My delegation believes that the sentiments of Foreign Minister Nzo and the effort to bring the new international norm on anti-personnel landmines to universal status are the priorities in this area, and this is, as I have said, where our priority focus will continue to lie when dealing with this issue.

I would request that the texts of the media releases made by the Department of Foreign Affairs in Pretoria with regard to the ratifications, and which are attached hereto, be circulated as an official document of the Conference.

Before concluding this statement, I would also like to address some of the issues which have been raised at today's meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, a meeting which, it appears, has the potential for becoming one of the more important meetings of this body.

(Mr. Goosen, South Africa)

Firstly, I would like to extend my delegation's and my country's congratulations to Ambassador Lafer, to his delegation and to Brazil on its accession to the NPT and its ratification of the CTBT. With Brazil's accession to the NPT, the international community has taken a significant step towards achieving the universality of that Treaty and continuing to reaffirm the global norm of opposition not only to the spread - proliferation - of these weapons but also the global norm of opposition to the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the need for systematic and progressive efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Secondly, my delegation would like to welcome the statement by Pakistan on its willingness to join in a consensus in this body on the establishment of an ad hoc group to negotiate an FMCT on the basis of the Shannon report and the mandate contained therein. South Africa has long been a supporter of the negotiation of an FMCT on the basis of the Shannon report and the mandate contained therein. We have also seen that the linkages which have been established between elements of the programme of action for achievement of nuclear disarmament - while we of course remain a strong proponent of the need to establish a nuclear disarmament ad hoc committee in the CD - were a recipe for no progress at all. It is our hope that the statement made by Ambassador Akram, the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan, to the CD, will be the stimulus to breaking the deadlock on the FMCT which has existed in this Conference since 1995. We also hope that key States in this body will, as the result of the significant developments on the FMCT, also re-evaluate their reluctance to having nuclear disarmament deliberated upon in an ad hoc committee set up for this purpose. The flexibility and positive approach of the broad majority of this body should be reciprocated.

Thirdly, my delegation has also taken note of the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of the United Kingdom and of the outcome of its strategic defence review. In this context, we welcome the nuclear arms reductions announced in the review, as well as the transparency in other measures which are to be taken with regard to the military-purposes stockpile of fissile material held by the United Kingdom, and the announcement that the nuclear weapons being carried in the Trident submarines will be detargeted. The establishment of a core group in the United Kingdom to develop expertise on how to verify the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons is also a noteworthy and welcome step, which shows that the United Kingdom, at least, is starting to look into the future to a world without nuclear weapons. It is steps and thinking such as these which my delegation believes could be further developed and elaborated by deliberation by all members of the Conference on Disarmament in the context of an ad hoc committee on disarmament along the lines of the proposal submitted to the Conference on 20 January of this year. At the opportune moment, we shall provide South Africa's more detailed reaction to and comments on the outcome of the United Kingdom's strategic defence review in greater detail.

Mr. PEARSON (New Zealand): I am taking the floor to comment briefly on two issues. First, I should like to record that New Zealand welcomes the move taken by the Government of the United Kingdom in its strategic defence review, which will involve reductions in nuclear warheads and controls on fissile

(Mr. Pearson, New Zealand)

materials. In particular, we regard the two initiatives - to improve transparency and to reduce readiness in weapon targeting - as being both constructive and progressive. Measures such as these are steps in the right direction. They will assist in underpinning the process of achieving further progress in nuclear disarmament, and they increase confidence in the non-proliferation architecture. We very much hope that other nuclear-weapon States will seriously consider undertaking similar moves in de-alerting and detargeting nuclear weapons.

I also wish to take note that New Zealand welcomes the statement today from the Ambassador of Pakistan, confirming that his country is able to engage in negotiations on FMCT. Along with so many others in this chamber and many countries outside, we have long regarded FMCT to be a top priority for the CD to address. New Zealand shares the views expressed here today by others on cut-off, and in particular those of the Ambassadors of Austria and Australia. We also would not link work on FMCT to any preconditions or other initiatives. Negotiations on cut-off will be a hugely important step forward and one that is worth pursuing in its own right. It will significantly enhance the non-proliferation regime, and it will underpin further initiatives on nuclear disarmament, which we are all striving for. Mr. President, we now hope that you will be able to guide the Conference forward so that we can take an early decision and during this session proceed to establish an ad hoc committee on the basis of the Austrian proposal and the 1995 Shannon report and mandate. This could well be another defining moment, not only for the CD, but for non-proliferation and disarmament.

Finally, I congratulate the Ambassador of Brazil on his country's accession to the NPT and CTBT. These are most welcome steps.

Mrs. BOURGOIS (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me first of all, since this is the first time I have had an official opportunity to do so, to congratulate you on taking the Chair and on the vigour with which you are guiding our work at a crucial time. France, a friend of Ukraine, feels great pleasure at seeing you in the Chair, displaying both your excellent diplomatic qualities and your inimitable mastery of our language.

On 23 July last, France deposited with the Secretariat of the United Nations, jointly with Germany, its instrument of ratification of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Landmines. That is the reason for my statement today. France had resolved to ratify the Ottawa Convention within a year of its adoption, and this has been done. On this date, with the French and German ratifications, 27 States have ratified this Convention, whose entry into force requires 40 ratifications.

My country also deposited on the same occasion the instrument of ratification of the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices, as amended on 3 May 1996, annexed to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. I would also mention that the obligations arising from these two

(Mrs. Bourgois, France)

instruments have already been introduced into French domestic law. Having completed these stages, France now expects the Conference on Disarmament to play its part in efforts to make the fight against these weapons more universal and more effective. In this context, France supports the proposals put forward by the Special Coordinator for the establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament to address this subject.

I had not intended to speak on another subject today, but I believe that the important statement made by the Ambassador of Pakistan, as well as those of Brazil and Algeria, should be welcomed. They call for a reaction on my part. It seems that the Conference has taken a great step forward today towards the opening of the "cut-off" negotiations which the international community has been awaiting for five years. A convergence of views on the urgent need to launch these negotiations is taking place. I would like to express my Government's satisfaction having heard the words spoken today by the Ambassador of Pakistan, which, following India's statements, make it possible to consider adopting Austria's cut-off proposal. I hope that the Conference will grasp the opportunity given to it to prove, as it has done in the past, that it is able to take advantage of political developments, assume its responsibilities, and show once again its unique expertise in the devising of an international rule which will constitute a decisive step towards nuclear disarmament. These negotiations will be long and complex, let us have no illusions about it, and that is why, if none of the member States of our Conference are now planning to stand in the way, there is no time to lose. We must without delay check whether a consensus exists or is emerging and, at the right moment, come back to this forum to take the necessary decisions. France is prepared to support you in this undertaking, Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of France for her statement and the kind words extended to my country and to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands, Mr. Majoor.

Mr. MAJOOR (Netherlands): Mr. President, since it is the first time that my delegation takes the floor, I wish to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of this Conference and assure you of the continued support of my delegation.

Nuclear disarmament is, for my country, a high priority. My delegation supports an early, if not immediate, start of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty as a further multilateral step, following the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, towards our common goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. In this context, the Netherlands welcomes the announcement of Pakistan that it is willing to embark on negotiations in the Conference on a fissile material cut-off treaty on the basis of the Shannon report and the mandate contained therein. We hope that this important step will lead India and Pakistan, as Ambassador Hartmann put it this morning, to desist from embarking on the path of nuclear weaponization. My delegation hopes that this positive step by Pakistan will be a first and not the last, and that it will be followed by other positive steps, not only by Pakistan but by all concerned, such as the signature and

(Mr. Majoor, Netherlands)

ratification of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Only in this framework can nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation be secured worldwide. My delegation hopes that the decision by Pakistan - and a similar readiness of India - will pave the way for the Conference to establish an ad hoc committee for fissile material cut-off treaty negotiations without further delay. As proposed by Ambassador Kreid, who has once again this morning convincingly set out the reasoning for this, we support the appeal to you - and we are fully confident that you will heed it - to do everything required to steer the Conference to a decision during this session.

My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to welcome and applaud, on behalf of my Government, the important statement of Ambassador Lafer, announcing accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the ratification of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty by Brazil.

We also welcome the statement of Ambassador Soutar of the United Kingdom, announcing important measures and decisions taken in the framework of the strategic defence review, particularly with respect to its nuclear policies, which will have an important positive impact on the gradual process of global nuclear disarmament.

Allow me finally to thank my Spanish colleague, Ambassador Amador Morcillo, for his wise contributions, including the one of today, for his pleasant cooperation and for his friendship. I wish him all the best.

Mr. GREY (United States of America): Mr. President, today's welcome statement from Ambassador Akram - that Pakistan will join with us and others in promoting a decision for the establishment of an FMCT ad hoc committee during this session - enables the CD to begin such negotiations. I hope that the CD can move quickly to adopt the proposal to establish an FMCT ad hoc committee made by Austria on 3 February. In that context, I support the proposal that you convene an informal meeting on Monday with a view to laying the groundwork for a decision to move ahead with an ad hoc committee at the next plenary.

I would also like to express, on behalf of my Government, the importance we attach to Brazil's welcome accession to the NPT and ratification of the CTBT.

Mr. MERNIER (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all I would like to congratulate you on taking the Chair and assure you that we have every confidence in your wisdom and know-how. You can count on the cooperation of my delegation and its flexibility.

The statement made by Ambassador Akram of Pakistan this morning is of vital importance for the future of nuclear non-proliferation. We cannot but welcome the position announced this morning by the Government of Pakistan on the negotiation of a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for military purposes. As my delegation has repeated several times, this treaty is an essential element of the task of improving the non-proliferation system.

(Mr. Mernier, (Belgium)

Together with the CTBT, it is an irreplaceable buttress of the NPT. My delegation is delighted at the prospects opened up this morning by Pakistan, and will spare no effort to launch and complete these negotiations. It supports the proposal made by the Ambassador of Austria that we should hold an informal plenary on Monday to deal with the last few weeks of the work of the Conference on Disarmament for 1998. We have not a minute to waste.

I would like to conclude by congratulating the Ambassador of Brazil on the statement he made this morning to the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. We have come to the end of the list of speakers. Are there any other delegations wishing to speak at this stage?

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that, at my request, the secretariat has distributed a tentative timetable of meetings of the Conference and its subsidiary bodies for the coming week, drawn up in consultation with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on security assurances and the Special Coordinators. I would like to ask you straight away to make a correction to this provisional timetable: the informal open-ended consultations on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference will take place on Monday, 3 August at 3 p.m. instead of at 10 a.m. We have all heard the suggestion made by Ambassador Kreid of Austria, supported by other delegations, that an informal plenary meeting should be held to examine the situation regarding the establishment of an ad hoc committee on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for military purposes. If this is the wish of the Conference, this informal plenary meeting could be held - bearing in mind the timetable we have already drawn up - on Tuesday, 4 August, at 3 p.m. in this room. As usual, this provisional timetable is only indicative and may, if necessary, be amended. On this understanding I suggest that we adopt it.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 6 August at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.